

THE FIRST YEAR

CHILD CARE RESTORATION IN MISSISSIPPI'S KATRINA REGION



Mississippi State University
Early Childhood Institute

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Note: Photographs of other Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative staff members appear on the inside back cover and elsewhere in this report.

On the cover: Children at First Baptist Preschool in Long Beach, Miss.

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Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY



This child at Gautier Academy, one of the child care facilities helped to reopen by Chevron and the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute, showed his MSU Bulldog spirit.

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INTRODUCTION

Young children suffer when their home lives are disrupted. For resilient children with generally stable families, the damage can be temporary. However, a disaster on the scale of Hurricane Katrina can cause serious, permanent damage to children already struggling to cope with the stresses in their parents' lives. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Aug. 29, 2005), the first step to protecting children from chronic or "toxic" stress was for their parents to restore or create greater equilibrium in their day-to-day lives. To repair their homes, return to work, and restore normalcy, however, parents of young children needed their familiar child care programs to reopen quickly.

As one of Mississippi's leading sources of training and technical assistance for early care and education, the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute (ECI) sponsored and supported a variety of projects to restore child care services in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. During the first year of Katrina recovery, ECI helped generate approximately \$12 million for child care restoration, providing various forms of help to 267 child care facilities in 26 counties (see Table 1), and launched a new national initiative for early childhood emergency preparedness.

Instant Momentum

Before any dedicated funding was available for the effort, many of the institute's employees worked overtime, giving up nights and weekends, to launch ECI's Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative. The earliest project was to provide administrative and technical support for a coalition, Embrace Mississippi's Children, that collected gift bags for young children in shelters and materials and monetary donations for child care facilities in the disaster area. Less than two weeks after the hurricane, ECI convened an ad hoc meeting at the damaged office of the Petal Parenting Center in Petal, Miss. (see Figure 1), where state agency heads discussed strategy for sustaining and reopening child care programs. Within another week, Chevron called upon ECI to conduct a sys-



Twin Oaks Child Development Center in Gulfport again serves the families of 98 children, thanks to the combination of professional development, technical assistance, and new materials that the Early Childhood Institute provided to the Harrison County center.

tematic assessment of damages to child care facilities in Jackson County, home of Chevron's largest U.S. refinery, and subsequently asked ECI to provide technical assistance for Chevron-funded repairs to licensed centers in the county.

ECI expanded its assessment to the other two coastal counties, Harrison and Hancock, sharing its findings with the licensing division of the Mississippi Department of Health until its own staff could resume operation. The Early Childhood Atlas, a research service of ECI and the Community Information Resource Center of the Rural Policy Research Institute, University of Missouri, analyzed the find-

ings from the assessments and produced a series of maps and companion pie charts that boosted awareness around the country of the child care sector's losses in the Katrina region.

This early commitment of staff time and expertise soon convinced the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to grant \$1.25 million to ECI to support the institute's ongoing efforts. The grant, which the foundation supplemented with another \$300,000 to support ECI operations, became seed money for an unprecedented infusion of charitable gifts.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The vice president for programs of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Gail McClure, said, when announcing its first grant to ECI for Katrina recovery, "It is our hope that the diverse and dedicated individuals and organizations working with the institute will be able to meet some of the



Young children at Gulfport Academy were interested in videographer Chris Ray's fuzzy microphone. Ray videotaped scenes at restored child care centers for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a major funder of the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative.

most pressing needs of families with young children in the Gulf area as well as lay the foundation for a strengthened early education and care system statewide."

ECI's staff strived to meet the Kellogg Foundation's expectations, inviting as many governmental, nongovernmental, and corporate organizations as possible to collaborate in rapid restoration of the child care infrastructure. Across the U.S., supporters sent contributions or made in-kind donations. Church groups and child care workers sent checks. Vendors at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children sent truckloads of display items to ECI instead of back to their own warehouses. Two anonymous donors contributed \$500,000 each, with no requirements except that ECI put the money to work restoring child care for struggling families.

After the U.S. Congress appropriated funds for hurricane recovery in Mississippi and Louisiana, the Mississippi Department of Human Services awarded \$8.5 million of the funds to ECI to continue repairs of licensed child care facilities.

While several major grants and contracts for the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative went to Mississippi State University, some contributions and grants for facility repairs were made to alternative recipients including The Help and Hope Foundation, Inc., of Jackson. Louisa Dixon, a volunteer for Help and Hope, provided hundreds of hours of assistance coordinating monetary contributions from Save the Children, the Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative, US Fund for UNICEF, and Chevron for construction and repairs. (Most of the Rebuilding After Katrina efforts were in Jackson and Harrison Counties, because Hancock County had much more

severe damage and a smaller child care sector before the storm.) The following funders provided grants or contracts to ECI during the first year:

W. K. Kellogg Foundation	\$1,550,000
Anonymous	500,000
Anonymous	500,000
Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi	40,000
Mississippi Department of Human Services	8,546,243



Connie Clay (right), project director for the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative, with Bryan Fulton, an educational sales consultant for Kaplan Learning Materials, which provided a discount on furnishings for many child care centers

Dear ECI,

We are so grateful and thankful for the furniture and materials given to us by the Rebuilding After Katrina Project. The children have thoroughly enjoyed the new toys and the teachers and caregivers really appreciate the time your staff spent on arranging our centers with the new furniture. We are also excited with the in-service training ...

We are really appreciative of the generosity of the donors who raised the monies for all this to be possible and the Early Childhood Institute for organizing the distribution of the donations.

Thank you for all that has been done to make our center a better place.

Nancy N. Turk
Director
Creative Learning Center
Biloxi, Mississippi

For more information about donors to the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative, see the initiative's six-month report: www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/reports.htm

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

ECI participated in three main types of assistance to child care programs in the Katrina region: technical assistance for structural repairs, donations of materials and furnishings, and professional development for returning and new



While assessing structural damages to child care centers in Jackson County, ECI employees slept in one of many recreational vehicles parked on refinery property as temporary housing for Chevron employees. (Annjo Lemons)

early childhood workers. These activities were in keeping with the institute's mission: to provide training and technical assistance to improve the quality and accessibility of early care and education.

Structural Repairs

ECI provided technical assistance to help Chevron repair 40 child care facilities in Jackson County and to help Save the Children repair 42 licensed child care facilities in Harrison and Hancock Counties. Many centers needed limited repairs, such as a new roof, but others required more extensive reconstruction. The single most expensive reconstruction was of The Children's Imagination Station in Long Beach (Harrison County), which the storm surge reduced to a concrete slab. Now reopened, the center offers care around the clock with a maximum capacity of 114 children.

The second phase of structural repairs in the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative involved rebuild-



The Mississippi Office for Children and Youth awarded \$8.5 million to the Early Childhood Institute in June 2006 to coordinate repairs of playgrounds at eligible centers in the Katrina region. While visiting a few of the playgrounds to be repaired, Laurie Todd (center) of ECI, and Julia Todd (right), child care administrator for the State of Mississippi, listened to a center director's Katrina story.



John Hall of the Early Childhood Institute unloaded a shipment of furnishings and learning materials at Edna's Child Development Center in Gulfport.



Much more to be done: Cathy Grace, Ed.D, Director of the Early Childhood Institute, surveyed a treeless, eroded playground a year after Hurricane Katrina.

ing damaged playgrounds because outdoor play is fundamental to early childhood development and Katrina was particularly destructive to fences and playground equipment. ECI planned to assist 119 licensed facilities, with a combined licensed capacity of 7,885, in rebuilding damaged playgrounds.

ECI staff members also advised the Pass Christian and Bay-Waveland school districts on plans to use another donation by Chevron to build entirely new licensed child care facilities as part of elementary school campuses. The facilities are expected to open in the fall of 2007.

New Materials and Furnishings

ECI used donated funds to purchase new materials and furnishings for 41 repaired child care centers. ECI staff members with advanced credentials in early childhood education designed sets of new books for classroom libraries and kits of teach-

ing materials for groups of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, with adaptations for family child care homes, as well as suites of new tables, chairs, storage units, dramatic play materials, and essential toys such as blocks and dolls. Approximately 40 corporations donated materials for the kits, and two major distributors of early childhood education supplies, Kaplan Learning Materials and Lakeshore Learning Materials, provided discounts on items that ECI purchased.

The institute also sub-contracted the Mississippi State University Extension Service to provide new materials and technical assistance to 53 family child care homes in the disaster region. Family child care homes are small, family-owned businesses that provide early care and education in private residences. Mississippi permits such businesses to care for up to six children without obtaining a license; thus, the providers that the MSU Extension Service assisted serve as many as 318 children.

Because the MSU Extension Service's Nurturing Homes Initiative sends mentors to family child care homes to provide one-on-one training for caregivers, it had a ready network of relationships with family child care providers in the Katrina region and was able to assess individual homes' needs for replacement materials and other aid.

Professional Development Activities

The goal of the Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative is to reduce the risk to young children of chronic or "toxic" stress by providing the highest possible quality of child care experiences. Untrained child care workers may not have the skills to provide basic early learning experiences, much less the sophisti-

Pamela Mottley-Myrick, M.Ed. (left, photo at right), of the Early Childhood Institute, has coordinated preparation of a cadre of teacher trainers who are training other early childhood teachers in the Katrina region to use the curriculum PowerPlay© with young children. The literature-based, small-group activities help children who have experienced trauma to regain feelings of safety and trust. Bobbie Black (right, photo at right) teaches five-year-olds at Kid Academy in Gulfport. In the photo below, teacher Andrea McCoy (outside the picture) has fully engaged the attention of a group of children at Twin Oaks Child Development Center in Gulfport.



cated social-emotional support needed by children who have experienced trauma. Yet as a post-Katrina boom in the construction and service industries lured away child care workers with higher hourly wages, child care businesses had trouble avoiding frequent turnover in their staffs.

Thanks to the support of major donors, ECI held workshops on a variety of basic topics in early childhood education as well as programs on Katrina-related issues such as mold elimination. The institute collaborated with the Children’s Trauma Recovery Foundation to train a group of trainers in Power-Play©, a curriculum designed to support social-emotional health in resilient young children.

These professional development activities supported early care and education across the disaster region¹:

Number of Workshops	22
Number of Topics	18
Number of Trainers	24
Total Attendance	1420
Number of Teachers and Caregivers	1031
Number of Centers and Family Child Care Homes	216
Number of Communities Represented	40

1. Based in part on MSU Extension Service attendance sign-in sheets.



Norma Hayes visits family child care providers to provide informal mentoring as part of the Nurturing Homes Initiative of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Here she worked with a grandmother and mother who operated a family child care home in a FEMA trailer in Pascagoula, Miss. The Early Childhood Institute supported this and other professional development activities for early childhood teachers and caregivers in the Katrina region of Mississippi.



Cathy Grace (right) of the Early Childhood Institute demonstrated “floor time” for a young teacher at a child care center in Jackson County, Miss.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE

After two more hurricanes (Rita and Wilma) struck the Gulf Coast region in 2005, ECI convened a forum on hurricane recovery and emergency preparedness for early childhood leaders in the Gulf Coast states. The federal Child Care Bureau provided crucial support for the forum by funding transportation and lodging for key invited participants. One theme of the discussions in the forum was that inter-state, inter-agency sharing of data about early childhood services is necessary for adequate early childhood emergency preparedness. ECI subsequently launched the Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Initiative to explore methods for improving interagency collaboration.

The central activity of this initiative has been to expand the Early Childhood Atlas as a national repository of core data for emergency preparedness and disaster response. By mid-October, the Atlas team had obtained core data about early care and education in 12 states with areas that are at high risk for hurricanes, earthquakes, or both, making some mapping services available at no charge during actual disasters to state-level child care and emergency



management agencies in those states. In addition, ECI has continued to collaborate with Save the Children to find practical ways to rapidly assist with early childhood programming at disaster shelters and with damage assessments and restoration planning for the child care sector. With additional funding, ECI will be able to expand the Atlas to provide basic mapping services for disaster response in all 50 states and to provide advanced preparedness training and



Wendy McEarchern, director of GRCMA Early Childhood Directions in Mobile, Ala., coordinated on-site arrangements for the Early Childhood Forum on Hurricane Recovery and Emergency Preparedness on Dec. 5, 2005.

Download a brochure about ECI's Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Initiative:
earlychildhood.msstate.edu/national-initiatives/emergprep.htm

technical assistance to child care providers in high-risk areas.

During the year after Hurricane Katrina, funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Day Foundation, Save the Children, and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, as well as the in-kind support of the Child Care Bureau, have enabled ECI to sustain the Early Childhood Atlas and the Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Initiative.



As part of its Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Initiative, the Early Childhood Institute (ECI) conducted the first systematic assessment of damages to child care facilities in Orleans Parish, La., in June 2006. Save the Children sponsored the assessment and recruited volunteers. Todd Battiste, M.P.A., M.A., of United Way (left photo), provided a base of operations for the assessment. In the photo at right, volunteers Justine Katzenbach (left) and Madeleine Maguire (right) prepared to assess centers in a section of New Orleans with Beverly Stokes of Lafayette, La. (center), a technical advisor on the assessment.



The Early Childhood Institute participated in a Congressional staff briefing Sept. 22, 2006. Cathy Grace (second from left) and Elizabeth F. Shores described ECI's Rebuilding After Katrina and Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Initiatives. Mary Ann McCabe, Ph.D. (left), of the Society for Research in Child Development, convened the briefing, where Joy Osofsky, Ph.D. (center), of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, and Gary J. Asmus, Ph.D., of the Center for Child Development at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette also spoke.

An executive summary of the Orleans Parish assessment is available at earlychildhood.msstate.edu/reports.htm

Read the proceedings of ECI's Forum on Hurricane Recovery and Emergency Preparedness here: ruralec.msstate.edu/reports/default.htm

DETERMINED TO REOPEN - MOORE COMMUNITY HOUSE

Replacement materials and furnishings for the child care program at Moore Community House in Biloxi, Miss., were still in storage a year after Hurricane Katrina, but repairs were underway and Director Carol Burnett looked forward to reopening soon.

The Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative of the Early Childhood Institute planned to deliver new furnishings and learning materials for the child care program when she reopens, and to assist Burnett with playground repairs.

Before Katrina, Moore Community House (MCH) provided early care and education, including Head Start and the federal Child Nutrition Program, and child care resource and referral services, in a complex of seven buildings. Thanks to a brand-new roof, the historic Epworth United Methodist Church survived the storm despite floodwater 15 feet deep, but it was the only structure that MCH did not have to raze after the storm. The US Fund for UNICEF and other donors provided money to repair the church, where Burnett will provide some child care once again.



East Biloxi, Miss.: Moore Community House served a tight-knit, diverse neighborhood. (Community Information Resource Center, Rural Policy Research Institute)

Darcy Greene, finance director for Moore Community House, says long-time residents of the working-class neighborhood in east Biloxi, Miss., remember Hurricane Camille of 1969, the worst storm in memory until Katrina.

Slow to recover: Bayview Place, a public housing development under construction a few blocks from Moore Community House when Hurricane Katrina struck, were still vacant and unfinished a year after the storm.



Burnett is coordinating the campaign to build a new child care facility, where Head Start, Early Head Start, and related services will be available to approximately 65 neighborhood children. Until she can reach that goal, she will use the 1925 Epworth church building, plus additional borrowed space at a nearby elementary school when it reopens in 2007.

Burnett also directs the Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative, which received \$215,000 from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to assist in the recovery of child care facilities on the coast. The funds are contributing to the renovation of facilities throughout the region.

More Information: moorecommunityhouse.org

A FEW LAST WORDS

The first year will not be the whole story of child care restoration in Mississippi's Katrina region. Much remains to be done. On the coast, Harrison and Hancock Counties still have less capacity, as indicated by the number of licensed child care slots, than before the storm. Repairs to playgrounds at licensed child care centers will continue through February 2007 or longer. Moreover, restoration of the child care sector will require more than bricks and mortar or new furniture and books. The region has experienced significant turnover in the early childhood workforce. At the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute, we hope to continue the professional development opportunities for early childhood teachers and caregivers in the disaster counties. Further, some young children will suffer long-term social-emotional trauma because of the storm, and we still have no means or method for getting the right kinds of help to them.

Concerning future public disasters, ensuring that young children are not overlooked in disaster response, and that early childhood programs are not overlooked in disaster recovery, is another challenge. The mission of the Early Childhood Institute is to

provide training, technical assistance, and research to improve the quality and accessibility of early care and education. We have learned from Hurricane Katrina that emergency preparedness is a crucial component of quality and accessibility. In the future we will strive to incorporate this fundamental issue into more of our ongoing work.

Hurricane Katrina was devastating, yet an unexpected opportunity for the employees of the Early Childhood Institute to work with a remarkable community of child advocates. Louisa Dixon of the Help and Hope Foundation of Jackson, Mississippi; Stephen Renfroe, Amy Brandenstein, and Ed Newman of Chevron; Jeanne-Aimee DeMarrais and George Haddow of Save the Children; the two donors who made major financial contributions and asked to remain anonymous; Julia Todd, director of the Office for Children and Youth, Mississippi Department of Human Services; Festus Simkins of the Mississippi Department of Health; Gail McClure and her colleagues at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation – to these people and many others, we give thanks.

Cathy Grace

First Baptist Preschool in Long Beach, Miss., was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and will operate in a cluster of modular buildings for two years before its new permanent building is complete. The center's post-Katrina capacity is higher, at 121, than before the storm, yet 100 children are on a waiting list.

The Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute (ECI) will help First Baptist build a better playground so that children, who will spend nearly half of their lives at the temporary facility before graduating to kindergarten, will have a pleasant outdoor play area. The institute also has replaced some of the center's materials and furnishings, helping director Ruby Blackwell keep tuition low for families who come from as far as Diamond and Saucier.

ECI's workshops for staff have "just been wonderful," Blackwell says. However, professional development opportunities are not a panacea. "Stress at home makes work hard for teachers" at First Baptist.



Figure 1. Communities Served by the Mississippi State University Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative (Sept. 1, 2005 - Aug. 30, 2006)

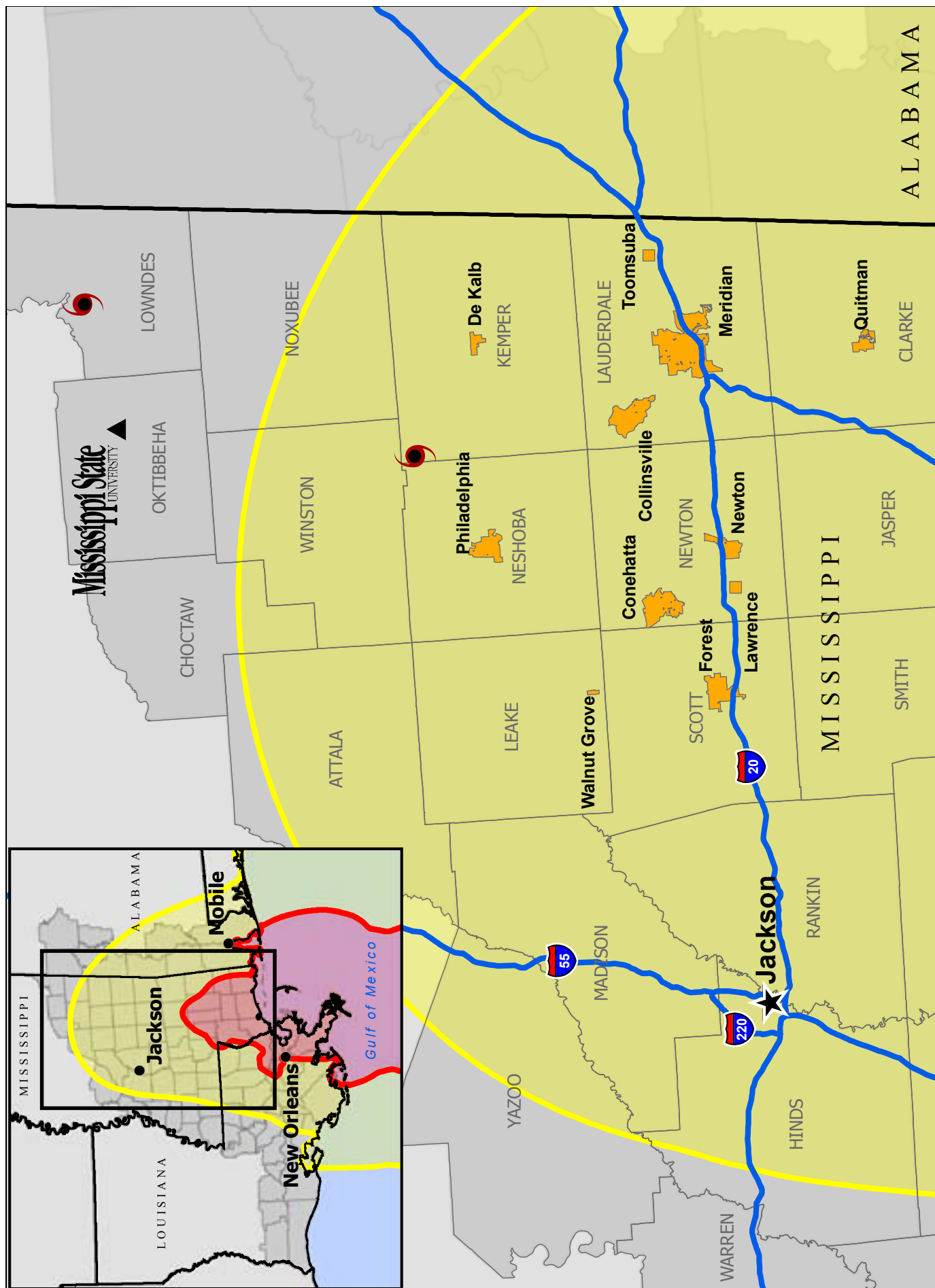


Table 1. Numbers of Child Care Facilities and Slots Served by the Mississippi State University Rebuilding After Katrina Initiative, by County and Municipality (Sept. 1, 2005 - Aug. 30, 2006)

COUNTY/MUNICIPALITY	LICENSED	NON-LICENSED	COMBINED SLOTS ¹
Clarke			
Quitman	1	0	30
Covington			
Collins	2	0	229
Forrest			
Hattiesburg	11	11	872
Petal	2	0	126
George			
Lucedale	7	0	434
Hancock			
Bay St. Louis	4	1	189
Kiln	2	0	513
Stennis Space Center	1	0	127
Harrison			
Biloxi	15	10	1020
D'Iberville	6	0	253
Gulfport	24	22	2002
Long Beach	6	0	413
Pass Christian	1	3	70
Saucier	1	0	59
Jackson			
Escatawpa	1	0	39
Gautier	5	3	321
Hurley	1	0	111
Moss Point	13	4	1150
Ocean Springs	14	1	1036
Pascagoula	9	2	904
Vancleave	3	0	244
Jasper			
Heidelberg	3	0	288
Jones			
Laurel	6	2	317
Kemper			
DeKalb	2	0	232
Lamar			
Lumberton	1	1	48
Purvis	2	0	125
Lauderdale			
Collinsville	1	0	74
Meridian	13	1	901
Toomsba	1	0	139

COUNTY/MUNICIPALITY	LICENSED	NON-LICENSED	COMBINED SLOTS ¹
Lawrence			
Jayess	2	0	73
Leake			
Walnut Grove	1	0	50
Lincoln			
Brookhaven	1	0	60
Marion			
Columbia	2	0	63
Neshoba			
Philadelphia	1	0	119
Newton			
Conehatta	1	0	60
Lawrence	1	0	24
Newton	2	0	67
Pearl River			
Picayune	13	1	1077
Poplarville	5	2	328
Perry			
Richton	2	0	133
Pike			
Magnolia	1	0	35
McComb	1	0	75
Scott			
Forrest	0	1	6
Smith			
Taylorsville	1	0	124
Stone			
Perkinson	2	1	75
Wiggins	2	1	161
Walthall			
Tylertown	2	0	100
Wayne			
State Line	1	0	60
Waynesboro	1	0	222
Totals	200	67	15,178

1. The maximum capacity for non-licensed family child care homes in Mississippi is 6 children.
Other capacity figures are from the Mississippi Department of Health (Sept. 8, 2006).

Data Sources: Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute; Chevron; The Help and Hope Foundation; Nurturing Homes Initiative, Mississippi State University Extension Service; Mississippi Department of Health (Sept. 8, 2006)



Eye-to-eye: Young children need lots of one-on-one interaction with caring adults. This teacher at Tiny Tots Day Care in Pass Christian, Miss., knows the importance of being on the child's level. Unskilled child care workers need training to understand the essentials of early childhood learning.



Photos (left to right): Annjo Lemons, Gail Lindsey, Ed.D., and Elizabeth F. Shores, Lynn Bell (Betsy Walsh, Buddy Johnson, David Bell)



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